

INDUSTRIAL ERGONOMICS

We frequently define industrial ergonomics as working smarter not harder. Is there a way to do the job without manual labor? Can we use mechanical tools or devices to assist our workers to do their job safer?

Improper ergonomics can put a worker at higher risk for musculoskeletal disorders (MSD). MSDs affect muscles, nerves, blood vessels, ligaments, and tendons. Workers are exposed to risk factors at work such as lifting heavy items, bending, reaching overhead, pushing and pulling heavy loads, working in awkward body positions, and performing the same or similar tasks repetitively. Exposure to these known risk factors increases a worker's risk of injury.

Districts are responsible for providing a safe and healthful workplace for their workers. A strong commitment by management and a participatory ergonomic approach with workers is critical to the overall success of an ergonomic process.



Tips for Workers

- Identify and provide important information about hazards in their workplaces.
- Assist in the ergonomic process by voicing their concerns and suggestions for reducing exposures to risk factors and by evaluating the changes made because of an ergonomic assessment.
- Complete training. Training ensures that workers are aware of ergonomics and its benefits, become informed about ergonomics related concerns in the workplace, and understand the importance of reporting early symptoms of MSDs.
- Identify and assess ergonomic problems in the workplace before they result in MSDs.
- Encourage early reporting of MSD symptoms. Early reporting can accelerate the job assessment and improvement process, helping to prevent or reduce the progression of symptoms, the development of serious injuries, and subsequent lost-time claims.
- Implement solutions to reduce, control, or eliminate workplace MSDs.

Established evaluation and corrective action procedures are required to periodically assess the effectiveness of the ergonomic process and ensure its continuous improvement and long-term success.

Further Evaluation/Training

SDAO offers free ergonomic training and assistance in developing your district's ergonomic program. Please email us at riskmanagement@sdao.com with any questions or to schedule a visit.